

Recently, the FCC has expressed a plan to require providers of broadband Internet connections (such as Cable and DSL technologies), and Voice-over-Internet-Protocol (VoIP) services to alter their networks in such a way as to provide simple "wiretapping" access to law enforcement.

While many industry professionals have voiced their own objections due to the cost involved in deploying and maintaining the proposed infrastructure changes, I am offering a comment as a concerned citizen.

I value the efforts of our law-enforcement personnel, and I appreciate that they have a difficult job in protecting citizens against criminals and terrorists. However, introducing regulations that marginally increase this protection while creating opportunities for abusive invasion of privacy are unacceptable. If we give up our freedom and privacy under the guise of "protection", we are allowing those that would disrupt our freedom to succeed.

Of primary concern is that wiretapping requirements will prevent the widespread adoption of encryption technologies for VoIP and other Internet communication. While the use of encryption is a difficulty for law enforcement, its value in making our nation's networks stronger against potential information-terrorism techniques far outweighs the increased difficulties for law enforcement.

Additionally, any system designed to allow easy access to law enforcement is ripe for abuse. While enforcement officers are unlikely to abuse the system, it does make it far too easy -- and tempting -- to do so. Further, any system which allows easy entry by law enforcement also allows easier entry by malicious individuals. Given the already serious problems of identity theft, I would encourage the FCC to use its regulatory powers to increase, rather than compromise, the security of Internet communication media.

In summary, due to the privacy concerns outlined by the ACLU and other concerned groups, the technological and fiscal challenges faced by the industry, and the increased potential for security compromises, I strongly urge the FCC to decide against its proposed policy to require easier law-enforcement access to broadband and VoIP connections.

Concerned Citizen and Consumer,
Darren P. Meyer